1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[4] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[4] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Col. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.
Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrol lable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives o lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife t the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroon treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. Afte he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroon travelled around for some years, returning home from time t time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two o them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house whil the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a littl higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *ptso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
● [212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, and although he can neither read nor write he is able to quote without hesitation or mistake details of local administration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756
755
301
142
291
415

The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
212
142
291

Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

778
249

A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[Facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

carrying the younger to slavery, and killing on the march such captives as are unable to proceed. Many enlist at Dorjiling, which the Lepchas never do; and the rajah of Nepal employs them in his army, where, however, they seldom obtain promotion, this being reserved for soldiers of Hindoo tribes. Latterly Jung Bahadur levied a force of 6000 of them, who were cantoned at Katmandoo, where the cholera breaking out, carried off some hundreds, causing many families who dreaded conscription to flock to Dorjiling. Their habits are so similar to those of the Lepchas, that they constantly intermarry. They mourn, burn, and bury their dead, raising a mound over the corpse, erecting a headstone, and surrounding the grave with a little paling of sticks; they then scatter eggs and pebbles over the ground. In these offices the Bijoos of the Lepchas is employed, but the Limboo has also priests of his own, called "Phedangbos," who belong to rather a higher order than the Bijooas. They officiate at marriages, when a cock is put into the bridegroom's hands, and a hen into those of the bride; the Phedangbo then cuts off the birds' heads, when the blood is caught on a plantain leaf, and runs into pools from which omens are drawn. At death, guns are fired, to announce to the gods the departure of the spirit; of these there are many, having one supreme head, and to them offerings and sacrifices are made. They do not believe in metempsychosis.

The Limboo language is totally different from the Lepcha, with less of the *s* in it, and more labials and palatals, hence more pleasing. Its affinities I do not know; it has no peculiar written character, the Lepcha or Nagri being used. Dr. Campbell, from whom I have derived most of my information respecting these people, was informed,*

* See "Dorjiling Guide," p. 89. Calcutta, 1845.

magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated /Wolfszahnmuster/ patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

/271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]). They are especially near the 'Arleng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pó* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Forbes, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all.

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapcho' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2]), because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tiberan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mõ-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Ialaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu.

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3]), is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4]) by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He

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[1]) From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nanga*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Nagas* is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2]) It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ‚Welsh' or ‚the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ‚Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. Taylor's ‚Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3]) The most trustworthy form is 'Sikkim', not 'Sikhim'.

[4]) This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. Paul (pp. 1—30, where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1686, died 1717 A. D.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

212 114 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 194 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitrarily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); although I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rām* or *Rāūm*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tiak* 'the head' is never pronomced *Tuk* or *T'yuk* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-no* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Suk-dam*, 'world', *Sa-ali* 'a bear', *Maun* or *Mōn* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-bar*' a musk-deer; *Pak-a'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yok-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-mo*, *Mun*, *Hlo*, *Kyong*, *Sa-bur*, *Puk-sik*. *Yuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced *Rueden*.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 288; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 166). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GRÜNWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Supplira Jātaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter ā, and ok for o.

[104]

ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE FOREGOING SONGS.

9.

539 ཀོ་ཐ་ཏེ་ཏེ་ཀྱི་ ཏེ་ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་ ཀ་
●212 ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་ ཀ་ཀ་ ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་ཀ་

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1 ཨ་ཁ་ཁ་ཁ

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ཨ་ཁོ་ནས་བཤད། ལན་ནི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཅི་ཞིག་ཟེར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།
དེའི་ནང་ནས་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཅིག་ཤོས་ཀྱང་ངེས་པར་དུ་ཤི་ཐུབ་པ་ཡིན།
ཁྱོད་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་ཞིང་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན།
ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཤི་ཐུབ་ཀྱང་།
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ཨ་ཁོ་ནས་བཤད། ལན་ནི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཅི་ཞིག་ཟེར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།

90.

ཨ་ཁོ་ནས་བཤད། ལན་ནི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཅི་ཞིག་ཟེར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།
ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཤི་ཐུབ་ཀྱང་།
ཁྱོད་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་ཞིང་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན།
ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཤི་ཐུབ་ཀྱང་།
ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཁོ་ཚོ་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་བ་ཡིན་ན་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཤི་ཐུབ་ཀྱང་།
ཨ་ཁོ་ནས་བཤད། ལན་ནི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཅི་ཞིག་ཟེར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།